

Agricultural Commission minutes. June 7, 2016

Members attending: Jay Stanbury, Norm Swanson, Cole Desmond, Royce Knowlton, and Christine Sandulli (alternate)

Non-members present: Beth Meyer, Nancy Crabtree, State Rep. Brad Hill, State Sen. Bruce Tarr

**The meeting was convened at 7:06 p.m.**

**Citizen's Queries:** None

**4-H.** Nancy Crabtree said the 4H has been at Appleton Farm for 10 years, led by volunteers. The members learn to care for the animals, halter train the calves, and show them at the Topsfield Fair. A current difficulty is finding a place to meet. They hope to gain a better understanding of the Agricultural Commission and form a partnership. Stanbury suggested putting the 4H on the agenda for September and will talk to Chris Ward at Appleton Farm about Appleton's involvement.

**Pending legislation:** Brad Hill reported the omnibus agricultural bill has been debated in the Senate and is now before the House Ways and Means Committee. The Legislature adjourns July 31, so action must be taken before then. General agreement on the bill, but some possible reasons for delay

- Amendments involving tax incentives have been added to the bill, but money items can't originate in the Senate. The House will offer the amendments when the bill is out of committee, then will need to go to conference to reconcile with the Senate bill.
- Bruce Tarr offered an amendment to form a committee to discuss the pollinator provision, but no committee has been formed.
- A provision has been added to the bill that the Board of Health must consult with the Agricultural Commission on regulations affecting agriculture.
- Slaughter house provision may go into an amendment to the omnibus bill.

**Board of Health:** The pending legislation does not address Board of Health issues. Hill said he would like to set up a commission to investigate farmers market needs. Stanbury said health regulations are interpreted in different ways in different communities. The state could provide clarity on enforcement

**Meeting with DEP commissioner:** Stanbury said the Agricultural Commission needs to coordinate with Open Space and Conservation Commission to administer open space for agricultural purposes and is pleased with a provision in the legislation allowing that. Hill said the DEP has a new commissioner and staff who need to be educated. He suggested the Ipswich Agricultural Commission send a letter to Hill and Tarr requesting a meeting in early Sept. with the DEP and Agricultural commissioners. Bruce Tarr suggested a meeting in Boston to set the issues, followed by a regional meeting on the North Shore.

Hill also suggested that Brian Dempsey, chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, be sent a copy of letters supporting the legislation and thanking him support of farms. He urged every member of the commission to send an individual letter, copying Hill and Tarr.

**MOTION:** A motion to request a meeting with the DEP and Agricultural commissioners passed unanimously.

Stanbury said he will investigate if a town meeting vote is needed to expand the role of the Agricultural Commission in administering open space.

**Minutes:** Minutes of May meeting were approved unanimously, with a change of the Three Sisters seedling sale date to May.

**Banner:** Cape Ann Sign can do a double-sided, reusable banner for \$965.

**Membership:** Kelly Jacklin and Christine Sandulli are resigning as alternate members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.